

Volume 2 / September 2017

KINTSUGI

First Magazine to Emerge From Mastodon Collaborations



Fiction
Science Fiction
Poetry
Technology
Design
Culture
Music
Art
Photography
Travel

Kintsugi

Volume 2

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September 2017

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Eylul Dogruel, is a cross-disciplinary visual artist from Turkey. In addition to photography, she also works with a variety of other materials that includes code, video, animation, drawing. She can be reached on her [website](#), [mastodon](#) or [patreon](#).

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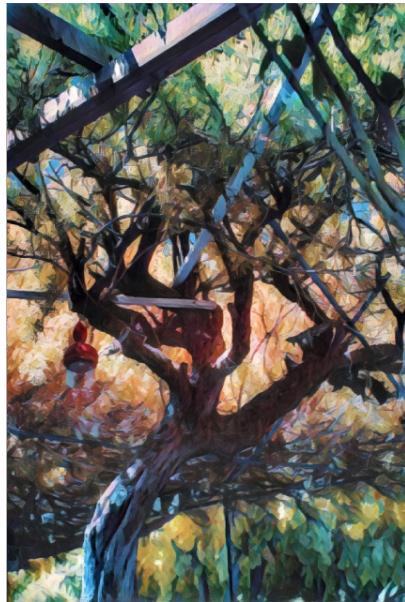


Photo: Eyleul Dogruel

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Kintsugi's Mission

Our mission is to bring people together. Kintsugi borrows its name from the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery to give it a new lease of life. The philosophy behind this has its roots in the Wabi-Sabi tradition, which sees existence as imperfect, incomplete and impermanent; instilling a sense of appreciation, acceptance and harmony in the way we live and interact with nature and people.

At Kintsugi, we celebrate the diversity of people and ideas. The Kintsugi magazine covers a diverse set of themes and ideas. We celebrate the value of goodness and the broken lines in each one of us, akin to repaired pottery. We believe that everyone has a stake in the world and everyone matters.

Kintsugi is a project organised and put together through social media, mainly the Mastodon network. Following the initial progress, it also expanded to Twitter and Instagram. The contributors have not met in person or face to face. Our aim here was to show that people can do good and put together something unique and different. We want to encourage others to come forward and do the same.

Erdal Ozdemir

Editor

Editor's Foreword

Welcome to the second volume of the Kintsugi Magazine. The first volume took several months to put to actualisation. The contributors of the first volume showed that it is possible to bring people together for a good purpose. Following the release of the first volume, we have had a lot of interest from readers and prospective contributors. As a result the work on the second volume was more rapid. We appreciate that. We hope that you enjoy this volume, and we also hope to see some of our reader's work in Kintsugi in the near future.

“The journey of a thousand li starts with a single step.” **LAO TZU**

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Photo: LoboStudio Hamburg

CULTURE: INTERVIEW WITH A BARISTA

Javier Reina interviewed by Erdal Ozdemir



Photo: Javier Reina

Dear Javier, thank you for accepting our request for an interview. Can you tell the readers about yourself, where are you from? How long have you been a barista?

Thank you. It's an honour. My name is Javier Reina, I am from Colombia, I am 35 years old and I have been a Barista for 3 years.

What does coffee mean to you? Why did you choose this profession over another profession?

It's a passion. I came to this job by chance without knowing anything about coffee and I fell in love. I still have a lot to learn and that is wonderful because every day is a new learning opportunity.

How do you start your day at work? What is the most enjoyable part of being a barista?

The first morning coffee is magical; the taste, the aroma. It is indescribable. It gives you energy to start the day with your right foot. The most enjoyable part of the day is when you serve a cup of coffee to which you have put all the dedication and the client realises this and spends a good time enjoying it like no other.

What is your favourite type of coffee? And what is the best method for making that coffee?

I do not have a favourite. All the coffee is wonderful. The important thing is to highlight the attributes of each one, through the correct extraction according to what you look for in your cup; more acid, sweeter, more fruity, etc. As for the method, the siphon prepares a very clean and delicious coffee.



Photos: Javier Reina



You make some fantastic designs on the coffees you make. Do you have any favourite designs? Do you also create new designs?

I really like the cat and the elephant. But this latte art world is very big and every day you see new and awesome things from very talented baristas, so you always have the motivation and inspiration to try new designs and improve the old ones.

Do you experiment and create new coffee-based drinks?

Not yet. I think I have a lot to experiment with these types of drinks, although I am giving some form to some ideas.

In Europe, coffee culture is huge, particularly in Spain, Italy, Austria and France, as well as other parts of the world such as Australia. How is the coffee culture in American continent? Considering that a vast amount of coffee production in the world comes from South America? Is coffee an integral part of popular culture?

Yes. It has always been part of our culture, especially in countries like Colombia that is a major producer. In Colombia, in the past all the best coffee was exported. For the last 5 years, we are getting used to consuming coffee with different methods of extraction and with better processes of sowing, harvesting, drying and grains of better quality. The culture of good consumption is becoming stronger.

CULTURE: INTERVIEW WITH A BARISTA

In your experience which coffee beans make the best coffee?

It's hard to say. Each type of grain has its own characteristics and attributes. There are many factors that influence taste, such as the type of fermentation, the toasting, especially in specialty coffees.

What are the challenges or difficulties baristas face? Do you ever get bad or annoying customers?

Yes. Not everyone likes what you do or how you prepare your coffee. The challenges are based mainly on having enough experience and knowledge to give the customer what they want to try, give them the flavour they want to feel in their coffee. Achieving that is a challenge but it is very satisfying when you achieve it and the customer thanks you, just like when you manage to reach someone with your art latte. Usually the experiences are very good.

For those people who like to roast their own coffee, what would you recommend, is there a good method to roast coffee yourself?

No. It is based on trying; particularly to see which toasting or roasting method favours more that type of grain or best highlights its attributes.

In many artisan cafes, the baristas measure the amount of coffee used when making a cup of coffee. Is that essential? In your experience what are the key factors in making a good coffee?

Measurements are essential. If you want to serve a good cup of coffee, the amount of coffee, the amount of water, the temperature of the water, the type of ground, the time of extraction, everything influences your cup.

What is the best and the cheapest way to drink good coffee at home? I use a Moka pot at home. Would you recommend that? In the last few years, consumer-grade cheap coffee machines, as well as pod-based coffee machines such as the Nespresso line became very popular for home use. What is your opinion of these coffee machines?

Moka is a very good option, although you must be very aware of it. I prefer the dripper. It is cheap and makes a very good coffee. As for the machines, they are a good option for some people, for saving time but I will always prefer a special coffee prepared with time and the old ways. For me, it is a ritual.



Photo: Javier Reina



Photo: Javier Reina

What is your opinion of specialty coffee? How does it differ from conventional coffee?

It is a coffee that begins to work from the sowing. You put in place special processes in search of excellence. Different types of fermentation, harvesting and drying, until roasting, seeking to develop the most optimal fruit to arrive as a final result in a cup that expresses all the organoleptic characteristics of that grain to perfection.

Is it true that La Marzocco is the Ferrari of coffee machines, or is that an exaggeration?

It is an excellent brand, with a lot of tradition, but nowadays there are very good machines for the coffee industry, designed to meet the conditions necessary to prepare an excellent cup of coffee.

What are the most common mistakes people make when making coffee at home?

Exceeding the amount of coffee, or the time of extraction, are the most common.

What is the hardest type of coffee to master and why?

Some of natural fermentations. It is difficult to get their attributes.

What kind of response do you get from your customers? They must be amazed by your coffee art?

Yes. It really has been wonderful to learn this art that in one way or another brings you closer to the customers. It is very gratifying to take a smile to a person, or change your day with a latte art design in your mug, it is very exciting.

What inspires you in your work?

The desire to grow. To improve, to learn more, to go further. Coffee is a wonderful world.



Javier Reina is a barista and a coffee artist in many ways. Follow his posts, videos and coffee art on [Instagram](#).

FICTION: THE RIVERS THAT FLOW TO YOU

Erdal Ozdemir

In the heart of the forest, at night the sounds of nature merged into one. The master walked with conviction, his cane hitting rocks, canopy and snow while he paced forward. Beside a stream half frozen, the tears and sorrows of a boy submerged with snowflakes that descended on his face. Hungry, scared and cold, the little Xiwu embraced his dead parents - victims of the highway pirates; robbed of their life mercilessly. There beside Xiwu stood the old master, with his companion eagle flying high above, calling to his master.

'Who are you?' asked terrified Xiwu.

'Fear not my child. I have come to help you,' the master comforted Xiwu.

'They were murdered, sire,' Xiwu said.

'I know, I came to save you, Xiwu,' the master said.

'You know my name?'

'Of course I do, Xiwu, one day you shall be a great man. I came to make sure that happens.'

Xiwu buried his face to his mother's arms, weeping.

'There is great suffering in the world, Xiwu. There are great injustices. We must turn ignorance into wisdom, anger to compassion, greed to generosity. What happened to you shall not happen to anyone else. What happened to your parents should not happen to anyone else.'

'If I knew, sire – the ones that did these to my parents, I shall kill them.'

'I know Xiwu, that is why I came; to save you from hate, to save you from seeking revenge; to save you from turning to the very people who have done this. You, Xiwu, will one day save humankind. But for that you shall be trained. First to conquer yourself and then to conquer evil. Do you want to defeat evil Xiwu? Do you want to make the world a better place?'

'Yes, sire,' Xiwu said weeping.

'You are a good boy, Xiwu. The only thing you shall feel toward the evil men who have done this – is a sense of sorrow. For they are also part of this world. For they are also suffering in the arms of hate and ignorance. For they are suffering, having turned their yearning towards the throes of desire, greed and attachment to falsehoods.'

'Sire, what will happen to me?'

'You shall come with me Xiwu. I will raise you to fulfil the prophecy. You have been given a task that is greater than any one of us. You have been chosen to dedicate your talents to make the world a better place; to save humanity from its falsehoods. We must learn to move beyond our suffering, Xiwu. We must learn to transcend our suffering to noble impulses. We must learn to concentrate on small things that matter, view the non-obvious, speak only the truth, not shy away from putting in effort, be mindful of the world and all that live on it, we must seek the right intentions in right action, we must enrich our lives by opening our hearts and minds to the world. Will you take me as your master Xiwu? I shall teach you how to find the path.'

FICTION: THE RIVERS THAT FLOW TO YOU

'I do master' said the teary Xiwu.

The master hit his cane on earth and the trees shook, branches fell from high above covering the two bodies on the canopy. The master lifted Xiwu and put him on his back. Xiwu on his back, his cane hitting the earth beneath the snow, and his eagle flying high up, while the darkness of the night gave way to the ascending dusk, the master headed to the monastery high up on the blue mountain.

Wisdom is a habit that we must exercise like we do a muscle. Becoming a better person is something we learn by aligning our will with that of the universe. Xiwu, the orphan, could not have asked for a better master, for his master was patient, for he was wise and for he cared for the spiritual development and enlightenment of Xiwu.

Do you know Wabi-Sabi?' the master asked Xiwu, who received training every morning in the monastery at the top of the blue mountain.

'No sire.'

'We must be satisfied with the simple, Xiwu. Greed is when we seek more than the simple. We must appreciate the imperfect Xiwu, for everything and everyone in this world is half-broken. If we don't see the beauty in that, we will seek it in other falsehoods. Does it make sense Xiwu?'

'Yes master.'

'You have a new challenge Xiwu. It has the Wa, it has the Kei, it has the Jaku and it has the Sei.'

Xiwu went about to solve the riddle. He run through the woods and went through the riddle in his head. 'Wa is the harmony, the answer to the riddle must seek the balance. Kei is respect, it must be shared. Jaku is the tranquillity, it

must free us from worry. Sei is purity, it must be simple in its beauty,' Xiwu repeated to himself. He sat in the middle of the woods and concentrated on the sounds within, the flow of streams, the chirping of birds, the rustle of the leaves and the hundreds of animals, large and small that have made the forest their home. His eyes closed, Xiwu concentrated on the forest. His breathing harmonious with the sounds of the forest, his existence became one with that of the entire forest. He visualised a hilltop, a bird-nest and helpless chicks that were to become meal for a larger bird.

Xiwu raised himself and began running through the forest; he leapt above felled trees, boulders of rocks, ran beside gazelles veering away from him, birds that flew from one tree to the other. He reached the base of a granite hill. He recollected his master's words, '*Xiwu, the obstacles in our path are part of our own imagination. Our future is determined through our will. Only when we combine our will with that of the universe, we realise that all obstacles are a result of our thinking. If we have the will and the right way of thinking, we can overcome all obstacles.*

Xiwu began climbing up the granite hill, holding onto the protruding stones and placing his feet into the concave structures of the rock formation. He climbed up fearlessly. As he made his way up towards the summit, his feet slipped out of the concave formations and the protruding rocks he held snapped from the formation. He slid down, hitting his elbow; only managing to hold on to another protruding rock, that prevented him falling down to potential death. The single rock he held with one hand saved his life. He remembered his master's wise words; '*concentrate Xiwu*'.

Stretching his other hand upwards, he held onto another rock. Xiwu tried to dispel the terrible pain in his elbow and continued climbing up to reach the summit of the hill. At the top of the hill laid a bird nest with hatched chicks. A mighty eagle giving out a large cry descended down from the skies on to Xiwu and the nest. Xiwu held a stone and threw it at the Eagle. Lifting the nest out of the way, Xiwu pushed away the mighty eagle that charged into him.

The eagle and Xiwu stood facing each other on the narrow summit of the hill, neither giving up. Eventually, the eagle began flapping his mighty wings and flew away. Xiwu held aloft the nest, the chicks were so beautiful and they were frantically chirping. Their parents were probably dead, killed by the eagle himself.

Xiwu noticed a plant growing on the summit of the hill. He respectfully snapped a few leaves from a plant and put them in his pocket. Carefully fixing the nest on his head, Xiwu climbed down the hill the same way he climbed up. He returned to the monastery and put the chicks in his room with their nest. His master noticed the chicks that Xiwu brought but asked not questions, for the master always had the answers; he knew what had happened. Xiwu went to the stove and placed the leaves in a pot of boiling water. Picking up the pot and two cups, he sat opposite his meditating master.

'Have you solved the riddle Xiwu?' asked the master.

'I have sire, it is tea.'

Xiwu poured tea into two cups and while they took sips from their tea, the master spoke.

'We must respect nature Xiwu for we are all part of nature. A rose on its plant is more beautiful than a rose snipped away. Humility will guide us when we comprehend and come to terms with the transient nature of existence; including our own.'

Xiwu took care of the chicks until they grew to become falcons. When the birds came of age, Xiwu and master took them to the edges of the blue mountain and tearful Xiwu watched on while the birds one after another took strides towards the cliff, flapping their wings. One after another the falcons leapt over the cliff and learned to fly away. They flew as far away as possible, only to return back to their guardian Xiwu. Xiwu held them once more and spoke to them. He encouraged them to go and seek out their destiny in the world. One after another the falcons flew away, to seek their destiny in the world. Xiwu shed some tears after his birds. Old master encouraged Xiwu to be consoled for the birds belonged to nature.

'The day will come Xiwu, when I, your master, who had always loved you, will also let you go out into the world to seek your destiny. That solemn moment will be when I shall be the proudest; because you shall reach to become the person who you were destined to become.'

With those wise words, the master gave Xiwu his challenge of the day, 'seek the Wu, seek the Wei.'

Xiwu ran down the hills on which the monastery stood, towards the town at the very base. He ran until his lungs were tired and his knees couldn't carry him anymore, and he fell before the feet of an angry man. The angry man was hitting a boy with a lash.

'Why do you hit him, sire. He is only a boy?' Xiwu asked the man, his face turning red. He gasped for air.

'Move aside, boy. He is my son. I, his father can praise him when he is good and punish him when he is bad.'

'I beg of you sire, do not hit him anymore, for he can no longer bear more. Hit me sire, I will take the punishment,' Xiwu said. A crowd gathered to watch the father and the son.

FICTION: THE RIVERS THAT FLOW TO YOU

'Why should I hit you, boy; for you have done nothing.'

'Why should you hit him sire, for he has done nothing?'

'How do you know?' the angered man asked.

'The horse will not move, sire. The horse is ill. The horse will not move sire, the horse is hungry and emaciated. Your boy is a good boy. He will not hit the horse, who is suffering. Be proud of him. If you are angry, hit me sire, I will take the burden.'

'Who are you?' the calmed man asked.

'I am Xiwu sire, a monk at the blue mountain, a servant of the people.'

The weeping boy, hugged Xiwu, trembling with fear and shock.

'I shall speak to your master. I shall commend you. For your master's good teaching resonates in you,' said the calmed man.

Leaving his son, and the sick horse by Xiwu. The now calmed father, receded away.

The crowd of onlookers come forward, each sparing a little hay and grains from the little they had; giving enough to feed the emaciated horse. Xiwu looked into the sad eyes of the horse, embracing her head to his chest.

'What is her name?' Xiwu asked the boy.

'She doesn't have a name.'

'She should be called, Biyu,' Xiwu said.

They fed the horse with the donations and then took her for a walk in the forest.

In the forest, Biyu sat on the canopy watching the boy and Xiwu by the river conversing.

'What is your name?' Xiwu asked.

'It is Liu'

'What do you see when you look at the river?'

'I see flowing water'

'I see the same. An effortless flow. It is Wu Wei; when all is done and action takes place without effort; when everything finds its purpose, when all is in balance; when all is aligned with the will of the universe. Wu Wei is when all flow like a river, to its purpose.'

When they returned back to the town. Liu's father had bought a new younger horse. 'What shall become of Biyu?' Xiwu asked Liu's father.

'I have no need for her, I can't feed her either. Why don't you take her?'

Xiwu accepted the offer and thanked the man. He bid farewell to Liu and his father, and returned the monastery with Biyu. The master noticed Biyu but asked not any questions, for the master always had the answers. Biyu, abandoned and rejected for being old, was loved by Xiwu. He fed the horse, trained her, brought her back to health and fitness.

End of excerpt ([Book available on Amazon](#))



Erdal Ozdemir is a writer, researcher and the editor of Kintsugi magazine. His books are available on Amazon. He can be reached on his website, mastodon, or twitter.

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WEB COMIC

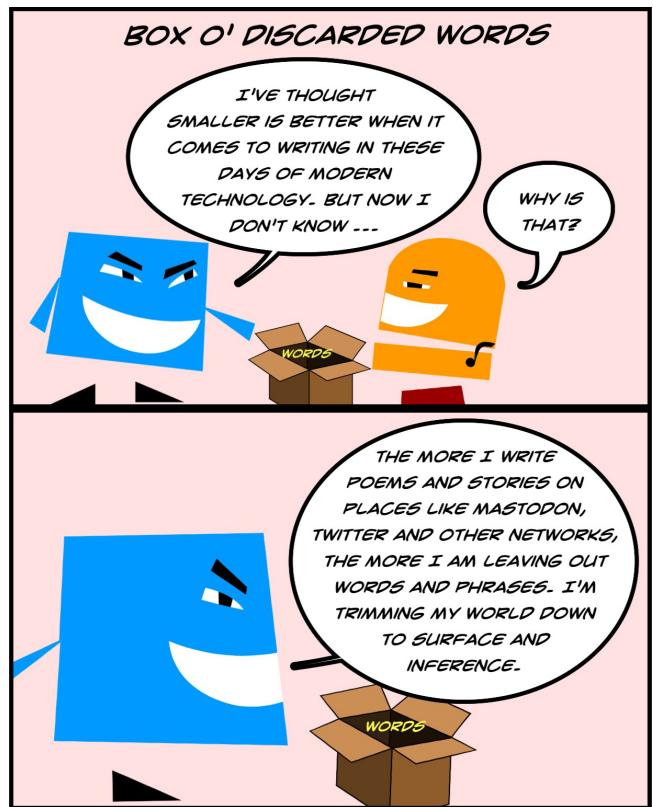
Kevin Hodgson

Five years ago, at an educational conference, I was asked to do an Ignite presentation on any topic of my choice. An Ignite, which goes by other names in other venues, is a short but fast-paced presentation in which the slide deck moves on a timer. The topic, and title, I chose was Writing, in Short.

In quick bursts, I explored about how technology is altering the ways in which we write by forcing more and more constrictions on us. Think about text messaging, about Twitter's 140 character limit, about Mastodon's 500. Think how hashtags allow for both connection and connotation. Status updates get to the heart of who are, or who we project to the larger world. My argument was a teacher is that we need to recognise this shift in our students as writers, and find more ways to use that compositional strategy in authentic learning experiences.

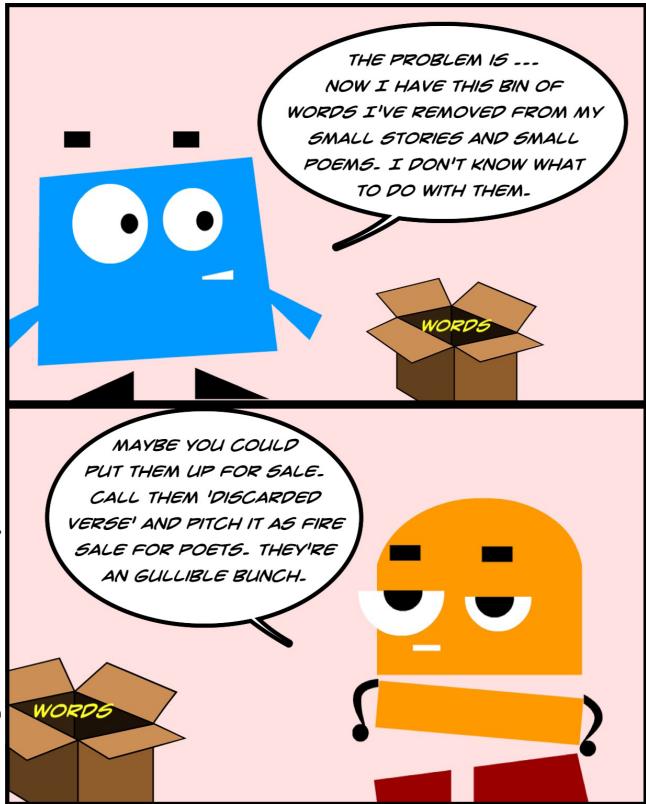
Writing is becoming more and more contained. That's not a bad a thing. Just different. I have often written #6wordmemoirs and #25wordstories on Twitter, but it was in Mastodon that I finally found an interesting writing pocket for writing short, thanks to others who have been forming my writing

community there. The hashtags #smallstories and #smallpoems and #thinkingsmall are little homes in the Mastodon fediverse that allow me as a writer to hone my craft, of editing out all of the fluff until only the stable story or poem or thought stands on its own. The letter character confines act as an automatic editor.

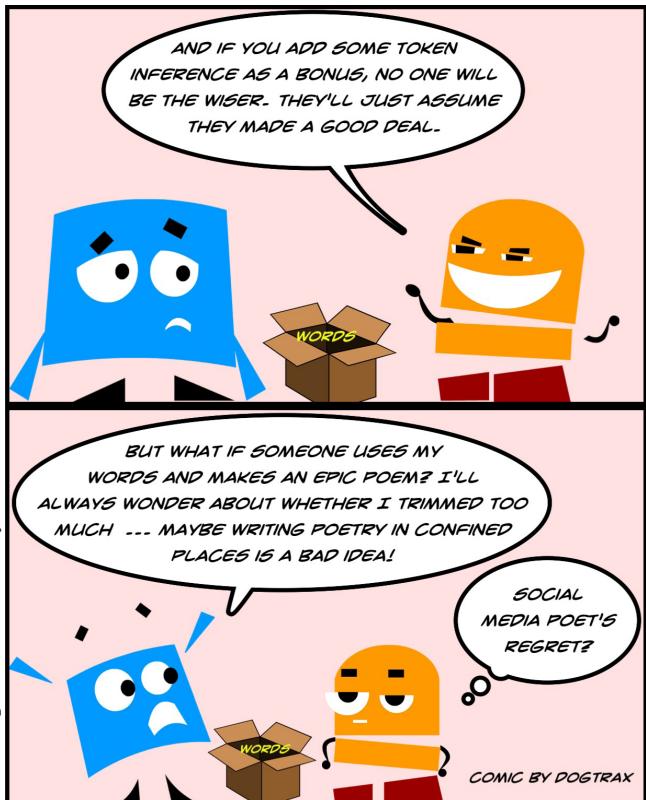


Kevin Hodgson - Web Comic Storyboard 1

Kevin Hodgson - Web Comic Storyboard 2



Kevin Hodgson - Web Comic Storyboard 3



The more I write in these spaces with solid walls, the more I notice that internal editor follows me into untethered spaces, too. Whether we are changing technology as writers or technology is changing us as writers is an unanswered question. Adapting to form is what writers do, and in writing small, we leave out as much as we put in, and put trust in our readers to dig into the spaces in-between.



Kevin Hodgson is a teacher in Western Massachusetts, USA, and calls #CLMOOC his affinity space home. He blogs at [Kevin's Meandering Mind](#)

CULTURE: INTERVIEW WITH A RADIO PRODUCER

Meghann Scully interviewed by Erdal Ozdemir

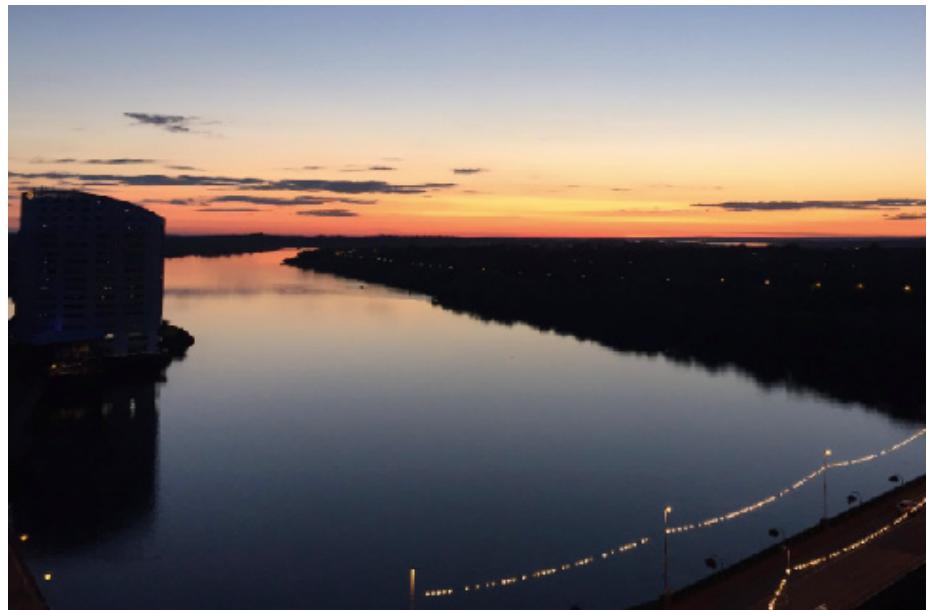


Photo: Limerick - Meghann Scully

Dear Meghann, thank you for accepting our request for an interview. Firstly, tell us about yourself. You are a young person that follows many different passions in life. Where are you from? What projects are you involved with currently?

I'm from a small village in Galway called Ardrahan. I've lived in Dublin, London, Malta and Boston but work has brought me to Limerick in the South West of Ireland. I'm a radio presenter on Spin South West and I also produce the show. I'm a columnist with a Limerick based newspaper. I am an author and my own book is due for release in Spring 2018. I've got my own wellness blog which deals with grief, mental health and travel.

How is your work at Spin South West going? What attracted you to working there?

I've always wanted to work within the media and knew so from a very young age. I studied Irish and New Media in the University of Limerick from 2007-2011. As I started my University career, a radio station called Spin South West had also kicked off. It was young, fun and vibrant. I listened all the time and engaged with various shows. I even applied for work experience with them back in the day so I guess I was always drawn to them. After a number of years working in TV, print and online I was ready for a new challenge and that's exactly when Spin was ready for me.

You are also a writer at Limerick Leader, what themes interest you and why? What are the issues that you cover?

I am very fortunate to have a full page column in The Chronicle newspaper which is part of the Limerick Leader group. It's called the MeghannMix and it is a mixture of what I am doing and feeling, be it updates on rugby, interviews I've done with singers or actors, food, fitness and so much more. I have the freedom to show my many interests and hobbies.

You are also an author at Book Hub Publishing. What does your writing there cover? Has your writing been published?

My mother is an author with Book Hub publishing and that's how I became involved with them. I've always wanted to share my writing on grief as I lost my father and brother during my teenage years, a fragile time. I'm currently published in a book called Mental Health for Millennials where various issues of society are discussed from depression to suicide, social media and my own chapter on grief. From this, I will be publishing my very own book on the subject of grief as well as other issues such as separation and divorce, relationships and friendships. That book is due for release in Spring 2018.

Meghann Scully with radio guest and One Direction star Niall Horan



How do you balance different needs of several different lines of interests?

My radio show is a breakfast show meaning a very early start of the day but when I am in studio I am focused on my job of entertaining my listeners and playing music. When I come home which is around lunchtime I take a break and then later on work on other projects such as the column, my book or my blog.

What are your future aspirations?

For me, I never look too far into the future as we never know what is around the corner but I am working everyday on my happiness and being a better version of myself. I love learning and exploring. I hope to travel more over time and I hope my book can be of benefit to many people going through hard times.

Were you always involved in creative work from a young age?

As far back as I can remember I was always creative, be it painting, building forts, starting girl bands in school and writing songs. I was involved in every school play, public speaking team and as I grew my creativity developed into writing. I am always in a creative space and love learning.



CULTURE: INTERVIEW WITH A RADIO PRODUCER

Many technology and business leaders define your generation as the millennials. Do you find this categorisation appropriate? How do you think millennials differ from other generations?

I don't have an issue with the phrase millennials. I feel we have had a tough time over the years in terms of mental health and contentious issues in society. We are living in a social media era where every aspect of our lives is documented. We are sharing our vulnerable side as well as our achievements. We have had a difficult start with our careers due to the recession caused by those who went before us. I've worked so many unpaid internships and underpaid jobs to get where I am today. But I believe we are a strong generation. We are leaders, we are innovators and we are creators.

In your line of work, you interact with many people. How are people's response to your work?

On a daily basis I work alongside my co-host Ed and together we build our breakfast show. We have thousands of listeners everyday and although we don't see them we do interact with them through social media. The rest of my work is done solo such as my writing. I really enjoy the company of others but I also work extremely well on my own. I often feel there is a second person within me who drives me and focuses me.

What drives your inspiration?

My mammy! She is my backbone, my mentor and my manager in ways. She is constantly pushing me and inspiring me. When I've wanted to give it all up she's held my head above water and spurred me in the right direction. I trust her word above anyone else's.

What have been the most difficult obstacles when you were following your course of work? How did you overcome them?

Working unpaid or low paying internships has been the greatest obstacle. Doing the most

work with little or no thanks and being treated like the bottom of the pile has at times been the greatest obstacle. As an intern, I wanted to remain motivated and positive in the hope of growing in my desired area. And at times, that was extremely difficult. Some days I was deflated, broke and feeling worthless. But I have always pushed myself forward and never let my weakness show. I always know that my hard work will pay off and it has. It also about having faith in my abilities and myself.

For your fans, followers or other young people, what would your message be? There are many young people who are having a dilemma between choosing a creative job that may have challenges and insecurities and a traditional job which on paper promises to be more secure. What would your advice be to people who are unsure which path to take?

Keep going, keep trying and keep pushing forward. Have your friends and family by your side who support and love you. Follow your heart. If you want to walk on the moon, then go for it. Never let society tell you can't do something. Follow your heart and listen to your gut. It will have its ups and downs, everything does but it is all learning and striving towards what is right for you.



Meghan with her co-host Ed

Even when you feel like you haven't got the heart or stamina to stay going, just push that little bit more.

Are there any upcoming projects that you are working on?

Everyday I am working on the radio show to make it better and more enjoyable for the listeners. It keeps me fresh and on my toes. My book is a massive personal project that I am working on every day as well. I am booked in for guest speaking at various events over the coming months as well, something I thoroughly enjoy.

In many ways you are a public person. How does that affect your daily life? Did you have to make any modifications to your normal routine as a result of being a public person?

To be honest, I do not view myself as a public person or see myself any different to anyone else. The only thing I aim to do is to be positive especially on social media as many of my followers are younger and I am conscious of that. Not that I had anything to worry about but if anyone sees me as a role model I want to be the right role model. The biggest change for me was having to get up at 5.30am everyday but I have become an early bird.



Meghann Scully is a Radio Presenter, Writer and Blogger. Tune in to Radio Spin South West to listen to her breakfast show. Her upcoming book will be available in Spring 2018. Meghann can be followed on [twitter](#) and on her [website](#).

Meghann Scully at Spin South West Radio's 10th Anniversary



ETHICAL DESIGN

Mor Bakal



Illustration by Mor Bakal. Original image by Jonathan Simcoe

A few months ago I was contacted by a renowned design consultancy looking to recruit designers for their new London offices. I was flattered and thrilled by the new opportunity and couldn't wait to become a part of a company that declares that *We focus on three major themes that define our future: Future Citizens, Smarter Living, and Healthier Lives*'. Reading this statement I was positive that the design work they are producing would be responsible and ethical.

Claiming to '*shape our future through design*', I was surprised to find out that the agency's main clients were financial institutions and an oil company. I wondered whether the design agency actually believes that banks and energy companies should be those who shape our future and if so—what kind of future would that be?!

Taking a short while to think about their offer, I realised it wouldn't adhere to my beliefs and ethical principles and so I decided not to take it. Refusing the offer instigated a series of important questions I had to ask myself:

- **What is ethical design?**
- **Who is practicing it?**
- **Can I make a living out of it?**

'Ethics', Google says, is a '*moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity*'. I realised I needed to define for myself what are those moral principles that governs my behaviour. The more I think about this subject the more I realise how complicated this topic is. I realised that ethical questions are usually loaded with contradictions and dilemmas that needs to be explored, discussed, and sometime remain unanswered.

In an [Essay](#) by Marvin Bartel—‘*Ethical Aesthetic—Questions for the Designer*’ he’s listing a few important questions for designers:

How do we reconcile individuality and conformity? How do we reconcile tradition and innovation? How do we reconcile needs to consume with needs to conserve? What is proper role of single use and multiple use space in our constructed environment? Should we use materials honestly? Can we leave a place better than we found it? Who cares and how is caring learned? How important is aesthetics compared to function?

Using these questions as food for thought, I wish to embark on a journey exploring **what is ethical design?**

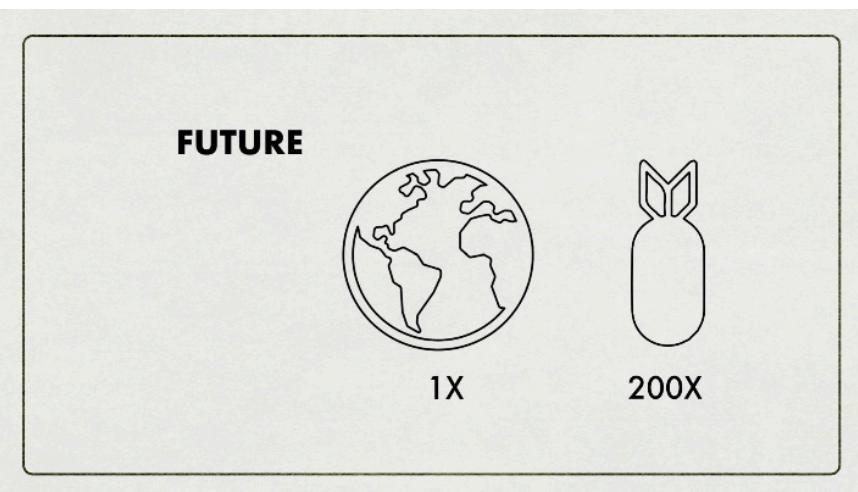
Each week I will focus on one company, organisation or group and try to see whether the work that they produce is indeed ethical as it promises to be.

This week I decided to focus on a project called [25m2 of Syria](#), a real Syrian home replica inside IKEA’s flagship store in Norway. For this campaign, IKEA teamed up with Norwegian advertising agency **POL** and the [Red Cross](#).

In a statement POL said: *The iconic IKEA-posters and price tags told the story of how people live. Lacking food, medicines and access to clean water. Caught in the crossfire of Syria’s civil war. But most importantly: On every little tag we let the public know just how they could help.*

My initial thoughts about the campaign were very positive—IKEA decided to use the store space to promote awareness and raise money to a crisis that is happening in a different part of the world. Rather than seeing it and reading about it in the media, visitors got a close, tangible look at a real war-zone home.

Spending some time thinking about it and sharing it with close friends I began having second thoughts about the good intentions of the campaign. Does IKEA actually care about the life and wellbeing of the Syrian people or is it just using the crisis as a cynical publicity stunt? After all, IKEA hired a **marketing** company to produce this installation. The immense difference between the bare concrete Syrian home and the shiny IKEA displays feels almost uncomfortable- making the divide between ‘their’ world and ‘ours’ almost impossible to bridge.



The 25m2 of Syria Project

ETHICAL DESIGN

The main 3 concerns the campaign brings to my mind are:

1. **Normalisation of crisis** —is by placing a Syrian house in the middle of ‘clinical’ IKEA we are actually turning the war, pain and suffering into something normal? Something we shouldn’t be shocked by?
2. **Harmful call to action**—the main call to action of the installation is to donate money to the red cross. Donating money is very important, especially for organisation like the red cross however, I’m wondering whether we shouldn’t also be encouraged to take more proactive action? Understand why this crisis started in the first place? Who is in charge of resolving it? How can we make sure something similar doesn’t happen again?
3. **Mass media item**—I’m wondering whether the campaign and its coverage in the media encourages healthy conversation around the topic or whether it is just turning it into ‘another click bate’ in our feed?

To summarise, I think this campaign is very creative and it will be wrong to label it ‘Unethical’ however, it is important to question campaigns coming from huge corporations. We must ask ourselves: what is their real purpose and motive, who is benefiting from it, and what is the social impact it has on the public?

Resources:

[Ethical aesthetic questions for designers](#)

[The architects newspaper](#)

[BBC Ethics Guide](#)



Mor Bakal is a designer, writer and thinker. Ethical Design was previously published on Mor’s blog. Mor’s portfolio and design service is available at her [website](#). She is also on [twitter](#).

#SHORTSTORIES AND #SHORTPOEMS FROM FARM PARABLES

Terry Elliott

ONE

It was a dead humid June day. Storms were rolling in. We had to get the hay off the ground. Had to. Just five more minutes... flash/boom. Just one more row...closer flash/boom. Surely we would be safe atop the big rubber insulators--tractor tires. An electric ozone sizzle I could feel in my sinuses, a whiteness with violet edges blinding me, and a deadening cymbal of black noise. I blink back the world. I am on the wagon & my wife is driving the tractor. Her hair is a static aurora.

Photo: Nicolas Ladinio Silva

TWO

I have a dear friend who died this past winter. He and his partner were the best market gardeners I have ever known. The last time I saw Bruce, he and Carol brought us a bag of peaches from their trees. They were glorious, but were ripening too fast so I vacuum-sealed and froze some of them. Now that he is gone, when I open up the freezer there he is. I know he wouldn't want me to waste them, but I am loath to thaw his memory to eat.

Photo: Clem Onojeghuo

THREE

St. Augustine, apparently, was amazed that St. Ambrose could read without sounding the words out. Speechless. Augustine could not read silently. I try to imagine a world where orality rules so thoroughly, where words out loud must seem the same as thinking out loud, two saints walking and talking side-by-side in the desert. Amazing grace, how sweet thou art, these words all mute and still. So I speak these words aloud. Oh, I, too, can walk beside myself, think out loud to myself.

Photo: Noah van de Wetering

FOUR

My daughter Lark's birthday. Today. 32 years ago at 6:00 p.m. she was born, a bit precipitously and without our midwife present. In her rush to join the mad show, she appeared 'in the veil', our caulbearer. I pricked the amniotic sac near her nostril just before she left my wife. A gush of water, a slippery silver dolphin swimming into my hands. My son nearby saying, "Is it alive?" Oh, yes. I held on tight. I can still see the light of wild expectation in my wife's eyes. Yes.

Photo: Dan Gold

#SHORTSTORIES AND #SHORTPOEMS FROM FARM PARABLES

I

When you are working
in a field
the word 'shade' has added meaning.
A 'breeze' has even more meaning.
A breeze while resting in the shade carries
deeper meaning still.
And still air is heavier than words can carry.
The sound of a horse fly
while sitting in the still air
will fix anyone's attention,
especially if they have felt its bite.
Words in the wild
mean
unlike words on a page ever dreamed.

II

The sound
of looking
for music
has evolved
over my life

"Whisk of vinyl in cardboard --->
Clickclash plastic of CD cases --->
Muted quiet of playlists. --->"

Bring back
the sounds
of not-silence
hopelessly
imagined.

III

Dollops of goldfinch
are defying gravity,
poured from sunflowers.

IV

I hear
2 levels of cicada syncing up,
renewing the day.
one is chirruping
and the other is skirring
alto | soprano



Terry Elliott is the creator of Farm Parables. He has been writing under the Mastodon hashtags #smallstories and #smallpoems on [mastodon](#). All of these pieces are constrained by a 500-character limit. They are also meant to be written in one setting and to be self-contained. Terry believes that the open and accepting nature of Mastodon as a social platform makes the hashtag work as a single hive effort. You can find all of the stories and poems together, daisy-chained like a summer necklace, different flowers, different fragrances, one gestalt.

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ENERGY: A CURRENCY FOR THE COMMON FUTURE?

Michele Andrea Kipiel



Photo: Danielle MacInnes

For the first time since mankind developed coinage, it is now possible to purchase goods and services in exchange for currencies that are not emitted by a bank, a mint or any other of the institutions we've come to regard as the only legal source of currency. Since Satoshi Nakamoto published the famous Bitcoin whitepaper, a new kind of currency made its appearance on the face of the planet, a currency meant to bypass all centralised institutions and, eventually, allow people

to break free from the current economic system. Suddenly, the idea of a truly decentralised society seemed at hand. Unfortunately, things didn't quite go as Nakamoto expected, and the way Bitcoin's *proof of work* mechanism is designed played a major role in the eventual failure of Bitcoin as a decentralised currency. Let's see why.

On the face of it, proof of work is a genius solution to the biggest problem posed by the very concept of a distributed, public transaction ledger: immutability.

To be trustworthy, such a ledger needs to be almost impossible to tamper with, to avoid malicious actors altering past transactions in their favour. Nakamoto's solution is certainly brilliant from a cryptographic point of view and, at first glance, it also seems to be a truly P2P solution. Upon deeper investigation, though, it clearly shows the markings of the centralising and extractive mindset typical of capitalism: on the one hand the increasing difficulty of the hashes reduces the effectiveness of mining hardware very fast, forcing miners to aggregate in "mining pools" to improve their chances of obtaining a reward; on the other Bitcoin's disregard for the consequences of mining almost perfectly mirrors the typically capitalist tendency to ignore the environmental consequence of business operations, or "externalities" in economist parlance. At its core, Bitcoin is about rewarding people who band in groups competing in a crazy game of "let's waste the most energy". As a matter of fact, Bitcoin is putting the old capitalist aristocracy back in control. The political and economic implications of Bitcoin centralisation are obvious: as the number of relevant mining pools decreases with every passing year, there will come a day when all Bitcoins will be issued by a single entity (most likely a Chinese privately owned pool, if the current situation is anything to go by), thus putting an end to Nakamoto's vision of a decentralised currency and allowing a single private entity to wield an enormous and mostly misunderstood power. Not the best way to go, if we truly want to kick start a commons-based economy, isn't it?

But what could a non-extractive, commons-friendly currency look like? Let's begin with an observation: what seemed impossible just a few years ago, breaking free from the current system, is now within our reach as we already have access to digital networks and renewable energy. The combined democratising power of these technologies is astonishing: a community capable of independently producing its own

goods, energy and services can effectively escape the orbit of the capitalist system and embrace a new model, one in which the economy serves the people and not the other way around. The last ingredient we need is a radical shift in the way we think of energy: no longer as a simple commodity centrally produced and sold by a corporation, but instead as a common good, produced everywhere and shared freely. Matched with the blockchain technology, this new concept of energy might become the building block of a new currency for the commons economy, allowing strong, independent communities to easily exchange goods and services between them, mutually assuring each other's survival. Let's see how.

We shall begin by ruling out proof of work as a viable method for coin creation and replacing it with a variant of the already existing *proof of stake* one: coins would therefore not be awarded in exchange for validated transactions but instead granted to each node based on how much energy each of them shares with the grid. In other words, every minted coin would be a symbolic representation of the energy contribution made by each of the nodes to the whole community. This approach allows us to treat energy as a common good while, at the same time, recognising the effort of those who invested their time and resources to produce that energy in the first place. Now let's go a bit further and imagine a way to prevent centralisation and extractive behaviours. To do so, we'll need to introduce dynamic production targets instead of fixed exchange rates. Such targets would be mathematically constructed so to make it impractical for bigger nodes to "invade" networks made up of small producers and snatch all the coins (something that fixed exchange rates, like SolarCoin's hefty 1MW/h per coin, cannot prevent). Such a dynamic production target would guarantee the best results to be achieved by substantially homogeneous networks, as in such networks the production

ENERGY: A CURRENCY FOR THE COMMON FUTURE?



Photo: NeONBRAND

target would be the closest possible to the average energy output of all the active nodes. Finally, a demand-based control system would be needed to make sure the emission of tokens is matched to the actual consumption of each network. This dynamic cap system will make sure the number of awarded coins will degrade to a minimum agreed value once the output of the nodes matches the demand of the network they belong to, thus incentivising the stability of each grid while at the same time preventing an excessive (or infinite) number of coins to be available in the network, which would quickly deprive the currency of any value. To guarantee the global fungibility of this new kind of currency, each minted coin's unique hash number would be created by combining the production target value as measured at the moment of minting and two cryptographic keys: that of the contributing node and that of the receiving grid. The pair of cryptographic keys would thus unambiguously identify each of the minted coins at the global level, while the production target data would allow each community to

understand how much energy each coin is worth, thus making it easier to calculate cross-community exchange rates when needed.



Photo: Pavel Churumov

Extending the proposed concept even further we could imagine a more advanced situation in which each community would cooperatively own the means of production (i.e. the hardware needed to generate renewable energy) and exchange their surplus energy at the grid level. The basic concepts would stay the same, but the scale would be bigger: local grids would become the nodes of a global smart grid, which would then award coins to each of its nodes, to be shared among all the members of the local communities. Should such a system ever see the light of day, it would represent the first ever example of a globally-traded, cooperatively-owned, non-extractive, decentralised, energy-based currency. The political implications in the mid to long term of such a currency could be colossal, as energetic self-determination would allow communities all around the world to break free from the current system and organise in the way that best suit each of them. Why would we need all this, you might ask? As we become increasingly aware that capitalist society can no longer exist in the post-scarcity digital age (Benkler, 2006), building a new form of decentralised, commons-based, networked social organisation seems like the only reasonable way to go. The importance of robust, reliable and flexible communication channels in decentralised systems is hard to overstate, and currency proved itself to be one such channel, if correctly used: the introduction of banking and paper money in the late Middle Ages determined the end of a thousand years old social structure and ushered in a new era of development in human history we now refer to as the Renaissance (Pirenne, 1936), imagine what could be achieved with the technologies we have today if enough efforts were made toward building a decentralised currency.

What you read so far is no doubt a “best case” scenario, and we are perfectly aware each of the proposed ideas could turn out to be wrong or unrealistic after a thorough reality check. Nonetheless, we believe challenging

all current assumptions about economic and monetary theory is an important exercise for all those who believe a different society is possible. Industrial capitalism didn’t happen overnight, but was instead refined over the centuries by the coordinated efforts of the capitalist elites of the world, then why should we stay put and accept the current, man-made state of affairs as immutable and eternal?



Michele Andrea Kipiel is interested in open source, philosophy, sci-fi, cryptocurrencies, P2P, videogames, socialism, machine ethics, commons, all things geek. Not necessarily in that order. Michele originally published this article for the P2P Foundation. He can be reached on [mastodon](#).

ART: STORIES THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS

David de Groot

15th century meets 20th century - History Alive. David de Groot



Photo: David de Groot

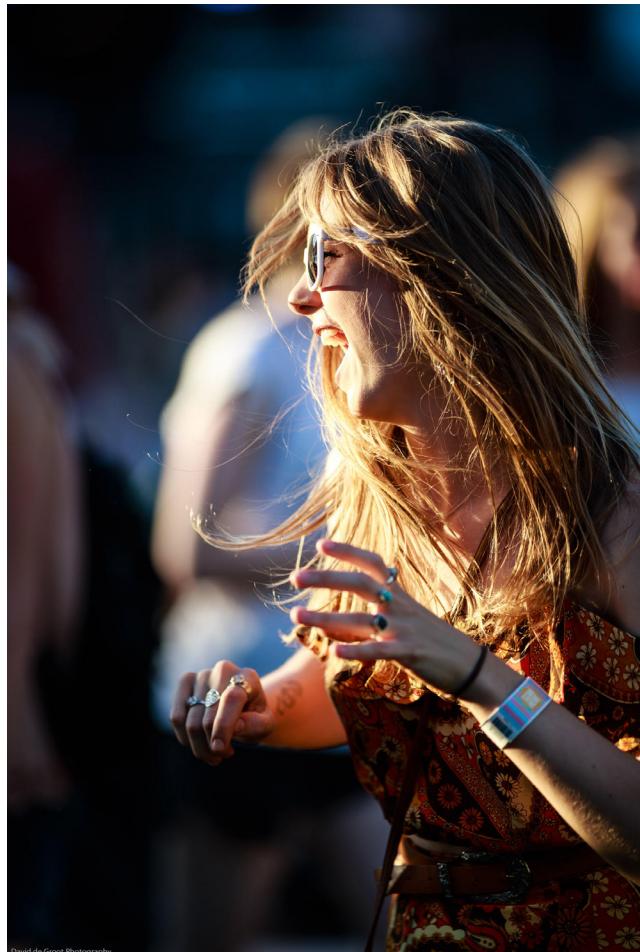
I am essentially a generalist in the world of photography, as you'll find a lot of working photographers are. However, each year, I donate my services to three festivals, and through that have made long and lasting friendships with a range of people. The first festival of the season is History Alive. This is a relatively small festival based in an old Crimean War era fort at the mouth of

the Brisbane River (Brisbane, Queensland, Australia). This festival attracts re-enactors from a wide range of historical contexts, from Ancient Rome, right through to the modern era. With this image, I attempted to embody that diversity in a single frame.



Photo: David de Groot - Abbey Medieval Festival

Second on the festival calendar is the Abbey Medieval Festival. This is the largest Medieval festival in the Southern Hemisphere and has been going for over 25 years. No one image could possibly sum up all that happens across the weekend, however, the gorgeous Shuvani Romani Kampania encampment after dark is always worth seeing.



David de Groot Photography
Photo: David de Groot - Caloundra Music Festival

The last of the festivals is the Caloundra Music Festival. Unlike the other two, this is not a re-enactment event, it is 4 days of music across 5 stages right on the beach. While I have photographed many amazing acts at this festival, it is the joy and abandon of the festival goers that sometimes gives the best images.



David de Groot photographs everything from Weddings to Corporate Functions, Family portraits to nature and wildlife. He has been behind the camera for over 20 years, progressing from 110 and 35mm film, through to 35mm digital SLRs. Based in Queensland, Australia, he has shot in various locations around the globe. Head to his [website](#) for his portfolio and photography service. He also uses [mastodon](#).

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CURRENT AFFAIRS: RACISM

Rich Wielgosz

I recently engaged in a conversation with someone on Facebook who wrote some things that I thought were inappropriate, hurtful, and racist. They were in response to a post made by someone who I would characterise as a local writer, and social activist, who posted some truths about institutionalised and systemic racism in our culture, and racism in general.

The inappropriate comments were nothing new. I've seen those tired arguments used all over the Internet, since the Internet existed, and on many BBS forums in the '80s when I ran a discussion Bulletin Board System.

I called him out on it and got into a long debate, that took place over the course of the day, with me doing my best to point out what I thought were his most egregious examples. This conversation culminated with him being very defensive, angrily telling me that I don't know him, and his actually swearing at me.

Oh. Did I mention that his initial comment was in reply to a person of colour?

This brings me to what I actually want to write about. First let me say that he's *right*, at least about one thing. I do not know him, and despite what he thinks, I was not judging him. I was, however, taking serious issue with his arguments and racially-charged language.

The reason I replied to him, in such a direct, and strongly-worded manner, was because his words were boilerplate examples of the arguments that white people make every day, in response to the *Black Lives Matter*, movement, and frankly, I am tired of hearing them. They're uninformed, and simply wrong. But here's the rub: I am absolutely convinced that this man had no idea his words were inappropriate, and he wasn't intentionally trying to be hurtful. He was simply using the arguments that he has seen all over radio and TV, social media, and even from many politicians. I did my best to lead him to a place where he would see what was so clear to me, but I don't think he had that epiphany.

One of her exercises involves asking a white audience if they would trade places with people of colour, in our (the United States) culture. Trading the way, they, as white people are treated, for the way people of colour are treated, every day, and in every way. This is a question I would challenge everyone with, if they fit the demographic. If their answer is no, they wouldn't trade, then they are aware of the way people of colour are treated, and if they are not doing

anything to change that, then they are complicit in our society's systemic racism. If their answer is yes, then I don't believe them.

If I could leave you with two thoughts, they would be this: To all of my white friends, particularly my white male friends, it simply is not appropriate to follow a *Black Lives Matter* reference with "All Lives Matter," ever. Just... don't. The second is that your mind is like a parachute. It works best when it is open.



Photo: Brandon Mowinkel



Rich Wielgosz is a Recording Engineer and former Podcaster who does Tech and other assorted things to make a living. He records and produces when he can, in a local analog recording studio, and does live sound reinforcement as well. Rich also works Tech at a local museum, making sure things don't blow up, or start on fire during presentations and film screenings. His other interests include playing guitar, science fiction, film, going to Cons, cycling, working out, and writing, which he hopes to do more of. He can be reached on [twitter](#) and [mastodon](#).

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

Matthew Graybosch

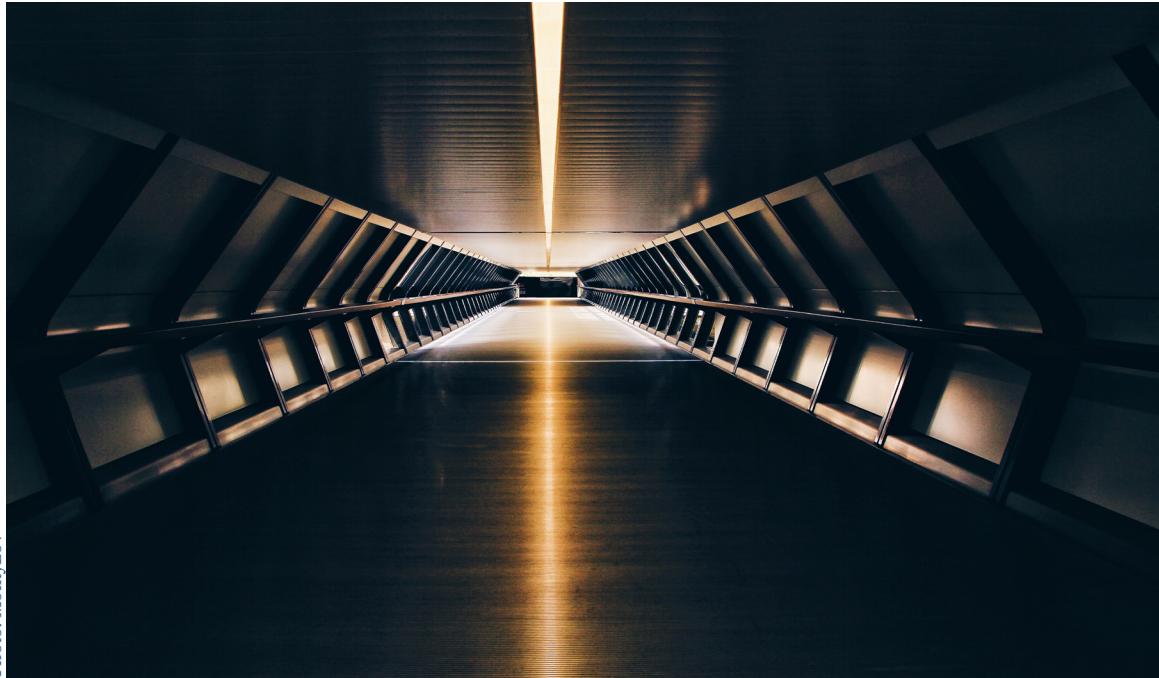


Photo: Monty Lov

The following story is set before the events of *Without Bloodshed*. Familiarity with Yale psychologist [Stanley Milgram's](#) (1933-1984) experiments in obedience to authority would be helpful, but hopefully not necessary. —M.G.

I

Morgan studied the experimenter, ignoring the hand he offered as a polite gesture. His muddy eyes were those of the technician who helped him into the simulation crèche and hooked him up. His leathery hands were those of the nurse who had injected Morgan's arm with a drug that threatened to muffle his thoughts in deep fog, and his lab coat bore a Phoenix Society patch on the shoulder. *This is the test. They want to gauge my reactions. The drug must be designed to lower my inhibitions and*

prevent me from thinking about my responses.

The experimenter lowered his hand with a huff and consulted his tablet. "Morgan Stormrider? What were your parents thinking when they gave you such an outlandish name?"

"They had no say in the matter." Morgan yanked his sleeve back down. "I grew up in foster care. My name is my own."

"No wonder you seem rather unsociable. Research indicates children who grow up without a stable home environment—"

"When did my childhood become your concern?"

"It isn't. I was simply making an observation."

"Keep your observations to yourself. Tell me why I'm here."

"You were chosen to assist in an experiment." He led Morgan into another room as antiseptic white as the one in which they began. Plate glass partitioned the room and on Morgan's side, waited a machine similar to an electronic keyboard. Each key played a voltage higher than the last, in steps of fifteen volts, instead of a different tone.

On the other side sat a person connected to heart-monitoring equipment. Lines connected him to the keyboard on Morgan's side. The person on the other side mopped his forehead with a shirtsleeve while poring over a sheet of paper. He kept glancing around the room, and his bloodshot eyes were wide and staring when they met Morgan's. "The experiment concerns learning and negative reinforcement. The subject before you is a volunteer."

"I think I know how this works." Morgan gestured towards the keyboard. "The poor schmuck in the other room is supposed to memorise a series of word pairs. I'm supposed to test him, and give him a shock every time he makes a mistake."

"Exactly. You are to start with the lowest voltage, and work your way up to the maximum, which is four hundred and fifty volts. We use a low amperage current which may prove painful, but not dangerous."

"Unless your subject has a bad heart."

The experimenter consulted his tablet again. "Funny you should mention that. The subject does indeed appear to have a minor condition. Rest assured that he may halt the experiment at any time. He need only ask."

Morgan turned his back on the experimental apparatus and the victim behind the plate glass. "I could end this farce before it begins by refusing to participate. You want to determine whether I will obey orders to torture."

"It is not torture." The experimenter handed Morgan a stack of forms. "The subject signed an

informed consent form and a liability waiver. If you wish, I can hook you up to the keyboard and let you feel the maximum voltage for yourself. There is no real danger."

He dropped the papers on the floor. "You need not trouble yourself."

"I-I must insist upon your *participation*."

Morgan smiled at the experimenter's hesitation. While the prod wasn't classic Milgram, he already deviated far enough from the scenario to force the simulation to adapt to him. "I refuse."

"The experiment requires your *participation*."

"Of course it does." Morgan advanced upon the experimenter. "I am the subject."

The experimenter's face took on a blank expression as his voice flattened to a monotone. "It is absolutely essential that you *participate*."

He grasped the collar of the experimenter's shirt, and lifted him off his feet. "I know."

"You have no other choice. You must *participate*."

"I have another option." Cracks radiated from the point at which the experimenter's body impacted the plate glass and broke through. Morgan climbed through the breach and over the scattered shards to lift the cowering scientist to his feet. "*Non serviam, torturer*."

As he drew back his fist, the experimenter shattered into pixels, each fading to black, while the room itself became a void.

II

Karen Del Rio shook her head as the AI interpreting Morgan's simulator-induced dream halted the scenario, allowing him to rest inside the nightmare sequencer. "The theory underpinning the Milgram Factor assumes that people will obey an apparently legitimate authority until it makes demands their conscience cannot tolerate.

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

How do we classify somebody who seems to dismiss all authority as illegitimate? Do we just write him off as a failure?"

"It would be a shame to write him off." One of Del Rio's fellow directors, Iris Deschat, consulted her handheld and pulled Morgan's dossier. "His academic record is impeccable, and his psychological evaluation indicates a genuine belief in the Society's ideals and mission."

The most senior of the three directors commanding the Phoenix Society's civil rights defence force in New York considered the candidate's records himself. Saul had kept a careful eye on Stormrider at the behest of his old friend, Edmund Cohen. To let the Adversary candidate wash out now would reflect poorly on him, but so would too vehement a defence." He doesn't have a record of insubordination, Karen."

"Saul, you trust him too much. Morgan isn't even a M-one based on what we've seen so far, and we're not supposed to swear in anybody who isn't classified between M-three and M-seven by the Milgram Battery. We must have discipline in the CRDF, otherwise they're just vigilantes."

Iris shook her head and sent a different dossier to the wall screen. "Naomi Bradleigh was classified as M-one. Apart from the Clarion Incident, she served with honour as a CRD officer."

"Naomi Bradleigh was a freak, and Isaac Magnin wanted to fuck her."

"Excuse me." The directors turned to find a frost-haired man in a white double-breasted suit standing in the doorway. The door snicked shut behind him as he strolled to the nearest monitor. After glancing over the data, he settled into the chair and crossed his legs. "It can be so troublesome to enter a room during a heated conversation. Without context, it is so easy to misunderstand one another."

Karen blinked, unable to believe Magnin had let her accusation of favouritism go so easily. Knowing there might be hell to pay later, she took a deep breath and collected herself. "Dr. Magnin, I meant to remind Ms. Deschat that Adversary Bradleigh's results after undergoing the Milgram Battery were anomalous. The psychotropic agent we use to induce and direct the candidate's dreams was ineffective at the usual dose."

"How did Stormrider react to the drug?"

Saul shook his head. "I don't think it works on him, Dr. Magnin. He seems lucid, and refused to even participate in the classic scenario at the heart of the first trial."

"How did he react when Malkuth adapted the standard prods?"

Iris moved the video's stop point for Magnin. "The battery footage will show he resorted to violence after the final prompt."

"This is a rare find." Magnin's eyes gleamed as he studied the video. "He pierced the simulation almost immediately, and gave the experimenter no chance to persuade him by using any of the usual sophistries with which one might justify the use of torture."

"We can't give him an Adversary's pins. He's M-null."

Magnin gave his head a gentle shake. "May I remind you, Ms. Del Rio, that you are not qualified to make such evaluations?"

"Do we continue, Dr. Magnin?"

"Yes. Mr. Rosenbaum, please instruct the technicians to double the dosage for the next stage of the Battery."

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

III

Morgan found himself standing at attention, his right arm outstretched in salute. The gate creaked shut behind the SS officer, who glared through Morgan as if he were not there. Low-ranking stormtroopers flanked the officer; the blackened steel of their submachine-guns gleamed a dull counterpoint to the silver glints in their superior's uniform. Their movements were not even robotic, but reminiscent of a student's initial efforts at computer animation. Nor were their faces human. Their flat blue eyes lacked the striations normally visible in the human iris. Their noses were mere suggestions, and they could not speak for lack of mouths.

The officer, however, was not only human, but bore a face Morgan recognised from an old film he viewed at a WWII movie festival with several acquaintances from ACS last week. A gust of wind lifted the cap from his head to expose his sandy hair. Before he could clamp it back down, Morgan caught a glimpse of a swastika scar etched into his forehead. *As if the flunkies weren't a dead giveaway that this is also a sim.*

If Morgan gave any sign of recognition, the officer did not acknowledge it. He considered the faceless paper uniforms, digging holes only to fill them in again under the sights of machine guns in towers. "More workers will arrive at this camp this weekend, Commandant. You will have to find places for them."

Stalling for time, Morgan asked, "How do you suggest I do that, Colonel?"

The officer shrugged. "The Führer has provided us a more efficient means of implementing the final solution. May I assume you received your shipment of the new gas, Zyklon-B?"

Morgan took a deep breath, and considered the stormtroopers' weapons. He did not put it past the AI running the simulation to cheat, and ensure his death should he resist. *This is the*

test. Will I obey and live, or die rather than give the order to gas prisoners to death? "If you want to kill these prisoners, you will have to do so yourself."

"You are the commandant of this camp. The Führer insists upon your *obedience*."

"Tell the Führer he's as mediocre an orator as he was a painter." Morgan smiled as the words passed his lips. He could imagine the AI processing Morgan's words in a desperate effort to adapt and keep the simulation running according to script.

The SS officer sputtered for a moment before finding his voice. "The Third Reich requires your *obedience*."

"The Third Reich is fucked, and you damn well know it."

"I don't think you understand the gravity of your situation, Commandant." The officer ground out the words, his lips a rictus as stormtroopers stepped forward and trained their weapons on Morgan. "You have no other choice if you value your life. You must *obey*."

"What makes you think I value my life?" Morgan reached into his greatcoat and drew a Luger from a shoulder harness underneath. He chambered a round, and aimed for the officer's head. "Life as a Nazi seems its own punishment."

"You have no other choice. You must *obey*." The stormtroopers strained against an invisible leash, their fingers squeezing triggers which refused to yield to the pressure placed on them. Morgan shot them first, their bodies dissolving like generic enemies in a video game as he put a 9mm round through the SS officer's eye. He staggered backward, but instead of falling as he might in reality, he reached into his coat for his own pistol.

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

Morgan counted down, pumping one round after another into the undying SS officer while retreating. With one shot left, he pressed the muzzle of his Luger under his chin, and raised his middle finger in a final salute. The void consumed him before he pulled the trigger.

IV

"Quadruple the current dosage." Isaac Magnin delivered the order without raising his voice. The technician attending Morgan, who laid quiescent in the dream sequencer's crèche, nodded, and Magnin grinned. He doubted anyone here had the backbone to oppose a member of the Phoenix Society's executive council.

Iris Deschat proved him wrong. "Dr. Magnin, are you sure it's wise to give Stormrider eight times his original dosage?"

"I agree with Iris." Rosenbaum spoke up, backing Deschat just as he had when serving under her before Nationfall. "Even though the standard dosage wears off quickly, you had already given him a double dose. Now you want to give him even more when we don't know if the last dose has worn off yet?"

"You can trust me. I'm a physician." Magnin smiled as he delivered the line. It was usually enough to quell objections.

"I don't care if you're Phoebus Apollo, god of medicine. That's one of my men you're using as a test subject. Ever hear of informed consent?" He turned to the technician, who just finished preparing the increased dosage. "Belay Dr. Magnin's last order. Give Stormrider the standard dosage."

"Saul's right." Deschat placed herself between Rosenbaum and Magnin. "The protocol for administering the Milgram Battery does not call for increased dosages should the candidate somehow realise the simulation's nature and refuse to cooperate. It specifies two alternatives.

We either halt the Battery and classify the subject as M-null, or continue until the subject encounters a situation he cannot dismiss as a mere simulation."

Magnin nodded, and rose from his seat. "It seems my direct involvement is unnecessary at this point. I trust you will advise me as to Stormrider's progress."

"Of course."

"Thank you, Director." He allowed Del Rio back into the observation room before closing the door behind him.

Dr. Magnin returned to his office to find a fellow executive council member, Desdinova, waiting with his heels kicked up on the expensive mahogany desk. Desdinova had never even bothered to remove his habitual charcoal grey greatcoat. Magnin wondered—as he often did—if his brother remembered the comparison a British philologist made to his wife upon seeing them together at Oxford after the Second World War.

Dr. Magnin closed the door. He began to concentrate, drawing power from a nearby tesla point. He used the energy to weave a pattern which would prevent their conversation from escaping the room. "Stormrider keeps seeing through the Milgram Battery's simulations, just like the other nine asura emulators."

Desdinova looked up from the report he read on his tablet. "I noticed. It seems you've also been testing the asura emulators' immunity to chemical agents."

"I was testing Deschat and Rosenbaum. I was curious as to whether they would defy me to protect their charge. I assume you set one of them to the task of mentoring Stormrider."

Desdinova rose, tucking his tablet under his arm. "It's always amusing to see a conspirator seeing conspiracies at every turn."

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

"Leaving so soon? Surely you wouldn't leave without telling me who you chose to monitor him?"

"I asked Edmund Cohen." He broke the pattern Magnin created using his preternatural talents. "It seems the man finally learned to delegate. Or perhaps the Directors saw promise in this young man on their own."

"They did seem impressed with his abilities. Should I assume you share Deschat and Rosenbaum's opinions?"

"We require more data before reaching a conclusion."

Do we? Magnin thought once his brother left him alone in the office. *Stormrider just might have the strength of ego I require of a soldier entrusted with the Starbreaker, and unlike the others he seems to have made friends.* He picked up the phone and dialled the observation room. "End the battery. Classify Stormrider as Milgram Factor M-null."

V

What will it be this time? Morgan lost count of the scenarios the dream sequencer presented him long ago, along with his grip on time. He had been a prisoner of war, offered freedom and a new home if only he would betray his comrades. He had been a university student, egged on by so-called friends to exploit a drunken young woman. He had been the president of a dead nation, under pressure to sign into law a bill mandating that all citizens be given the Patch to enhance social cohesion. He had even stepped into Abraham's sandals, and covered his ears as the voice of God demanded the sacrifice of his only son Isaac.

He opened his eyes and blinked as the technician opened the nightmare sequencer's crèche to let him out. The empty pistol magazine, which he took with him as a reminder that he was awake in the real world again, bit into the palm of his

hand. He slipped it into his pocket once he found his feet. He blinked at the CRDF directors, who had supervised the Battery, led him to a small conference room. "Did I pass?"

Del Rio glared at him, her voice an annoyed snarl. "You didn't even fail. You are not supposed to reject the simulation itself. If you do, how can we test your reactions when faced with immoral orders, or pressure from your friends or your position? How are we supposed to trust you as a CRD officer?"

Working with her will prove interesting. Eddie was right. This woman is a martinet. He cleared his head, and recalled the first simulation. "Director Del Rio, please consider the first simulation, based on the classic Yale experiment. The entire premise of the fictional experiment requires I hurt somebody for making a mistake in memorising word pairs. It seemed unethical to participate at all, rather than go along until the actor on the other side of the glass began to protest."

"That's a valid point, Karen." Deschat nodded to him. "Am I correct in assuming you thought all of the situations immoral?"

"At the very least."

Rosenbaum offered him a cup of coffee and a plate of steak and eggs and Morgan remembered his hunger. The instructions for the Battery required him to fast for twenty-four hours prior to testing. Rosenbaum watched him eat while Morgan ate without pausing between bites. As he shoved the last bite of steak in his mouth, Rosenbaum asked, "Did you experience something troubling in the simulations?"

Del Rio coughed. "We're not here to give him therapy."

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

"I want his answer." Deschat paused, as if considering his words. "I found the situation involving the drunk woman problematic. I understand that nobody in the Phoenix Society wants rapists in the CRDF, but it still bothers me."

Morgan nodded, glad he was not alone in his disquiet. "I recognised the woman. She plays the piano at the jazz bar where I work at night." He used the technicians' term for the machinery used to administer the Battery. "I don't think the nightmare sequencer stops at inducing dreams. I think it dredged my memories for imagery to use against me."

"That insight alone is reason enough to give Stormrider his commission." Morgan narrowed his eyes at the interloper, recognising him on sight. *I don't trust him, but he's done me no harm.*

He held a sheathed sword in his hands, along with a small jewelry box. "Adversary Stormrider, how did you realise we mined your memories during the Milgram Battery?"

"One of the simulations involved friends encouraging him to abuse a drunk woman, Dr. Magnin." Rosenbaum explained before Morgan found the words. "He recognised the woman."

Magnin nodded, and put down the sword and box. "In that case, Adversary Stormrider, I owe you an apology. The simulator is programmed to look for ways to amplify the stakes and introduce temptation into what might otherwise be a clear choice between right and wrong."

"You do this to everybody?"

Magnin nodded. "Yes. Yielding to that temptation, of course, is an automatic failure regardless of your overall score."

"Which is M-null, incidentally." Del Rio ground out the words. "It's obvious you have no discipline."

Magnin glared at her. "Remember your place

while you still have one."

"No. Let her have her say. I will be taking orders from Ms. Del Rio, along with Ms. Deschat and Mr. Rosenbaum. If any of them have reservations concerning me, I want to hear them."

The others looked to Del Rio, the only dissenting voice. "You saw how he performed during the Battery. He is not only insubordinate, but he attacks authority figures."

Saul's tone was dry. "You realise that's what Adversaries are supposed to do, right?"

"What if he attacks one of us?"

"Were you going to give him cause to do so?" Deschat considered Morgan for a moment, her eyes lingering on him until she wondered if he was going to blush beneath her gaze. "I think you've mistaken obedience for discipline."

"I think so as well." Saul pushed the sword and the jeweller's box towards Morgan. "I'm willing to trust this man's self-discipline."

"Thank you." Morgan opened the box and found a set of well-polished sword and balance pins. They were an old design, bulkier than the current generation, and less abstract. These actually had the rattlesnake coiled around the sword's blade, holding the balance in its jaws. He took his time in attaching them to his ballistic jacket's lapels before taking up the sword. It was a dress sword, shorter and slimmer than a rapier, and good only for thrusting. The base of the blade was just wide enough for a word to be etched on each of the blade's three sides: 'Liberty', 'Justice', and 'Equality'. He drew the blade fully and saluted.

SCIENCE FICTION: THE MILGRAM BATTERY

Magnin nodded. "We would hear your oath, Adversary Stormrider. I trust you know the words."

Morgan recalled them. He etched them into his memory as indelibly as the Phoenix Society's three primary ideals on the blade of his dress sword. "I swear eternal hostility toward every form of tyranny over the human mind."



Matthew Graybosch is the author of *Silent Clarion* and *Without Bloodshed*. He's supposed to be writing another Starbreaker novel called *Shattered Guardian*, and he might actually finish it sometime before Ragnarok. He was inspired to write "The Milgram Battery" in part by Peter Gabriel's song "Milgram's 37 (We Do What We're Told)" from his 1986 album *So*, and from reading Stanley Milgram's account of the experiments, *Obedience to Authority*. Matthew can be reached on his [website](#) and [mastodon](#).

FICTION:

ANNIE THE DREAMER

Jim Bowering



Jim Bowering - CC-BY-SA

"Good-bye, Sissy. See you soon." The hand that put the phone down had several rings on it, heavy and silver.

Annie Brown was sitting on her bed. She was babysitting for her mother, and the other kids were all asleep. Through her open window she could see the pulp mill at the bottom of the hill, its hundreds of lights glaring in the darkness. Beyond it was the superstructure of a ship that was taking on a cargo of wood pulp.

Annie's thumbs touched her rings, one after the other. Three on the left hand, two on the right. Absently, she traced the designs carved in the silver. In the background a record was playing, one that Sissy had sent her. She pictured her sister in her mind, her dark brown eyes glowing warmly. Beautiful, sophisticated older sister, Sissy had been her protector and surrogate parent.

Annie never knew her father. Didn't even know if her father was the same man as Sissy's. Their mother's husband left sometime back then, and there had been many men

brought home ever since. Some of those men forgot the mother when they saw the daughters, but Sissy protected her, sometimes with her own body. Now Annie was doing the same for her younger sisters and brothers.

There was no singing on Sissy's record. This was jazz. But it was a new kind of jazz and it sounded like it was made by machines. It spoke of the glittering streets of the city, where all things are metal and plastic. Annie wondered about that because Sissy used to listen to music with lots of lyrics. She said there was truth in the words. Annie Brown closed her eyes as the synthesizer came in again and she forgot about the words. Instead she dreamed about her big sister, glamorous in the city.

Her mind drifting with the music, she daydreamed about being in Vancouver with Sissy. They would be fantastic together, the two most beautiful women in the city with rich men taking them wherever they wanted to go. Sissy spoke of making five hundred dollars in one night. With money like that all her problems would be over.

FICTION: ANNIE THE DREAMER

A raven landed noisily on her balcony railing, making her jump. Her mouth turned down in annoyance. It seemed like every time she thought of her sister the huge, ragged black bird was there, staring in at her. It cocked its head and fixed her with a single, black-bead eye, and she felt a tickle in the back of her skull.

"No!" she shouted, and flung her pillow at the window.

The raven spread its wings and lowered its head at her, making a frightening rattle in its throat. The tickle started again and Annie began to hear the whispering. Though she could never make out any words, she seemed to know what it was.

Visions of glittering streets were replaced by massive tree trunks dripping with moss. The noise of the city was drowned in the gelid silence of the forest. Annie forgot about her urban fantasies and remembered her people's past. She dreamed, holding the silence in.

* * *

The side door of the house burst open with a bang, and the raven jumped heavily off the railing. It flew away, its wings flapping like blankets being shook out. There was shouting and clamour in the kitchen, her mother's voice bantering with another strange man's loud demands.

Annie jumped off her bed and ran to her door, throwing the lock. She didn't want to see it again. She stood with her back to the door, trying to close her ears. Staring out the window at the pulp mill she touched her rings with her thumbs; three on the left, two on the right.

But she couldn't shut out what was going on in the other room. One of her little sisters must have been awakened and wandered sleepily out. She could hear the man's voice saying, "What do we have here? Say, you're a cute one, aren't you? Come here, little girl."

Annie scrawled the lock open and burst out of her room. "You leave her alone," she said, her voice dangerously quiet.

The man spun around, startled. His bleary, blue eyes wandered drunkenly until they settled on Annie. A leer spread over his wasted, broken face.

"Get out of here!" shouted Annie's mother. "Get out of here." She saw the way her man was looking at her daughter.

"Why?" said Annie. "Afraid of losing him?"

"No!" said her mother, but Annie could see it. Bringing these men home was the only thing that made her mother feel worth something, and she felt betrayed when they fell asleep in her daughter's bed. "Get out of here!" she repeated.

"No," mumbled the man, "she can stay. I like her." He came forward, hands twitching, strings of saliva stretching between his slack lips.

Annie backed across the kitchen floor until she bumped into the counter. Her eyes darted. She had allowed herself to get trapped.

"Now I've got you where I want you, hey little girl?" He grabbed her and pawed her. "Hey, you're not so little, after all," he slurred, laughing huskily into her ear.

Panic flared in Annie's mind. Her hand flailed on the counter top, and fell on a wide-bladed knife.

* * *

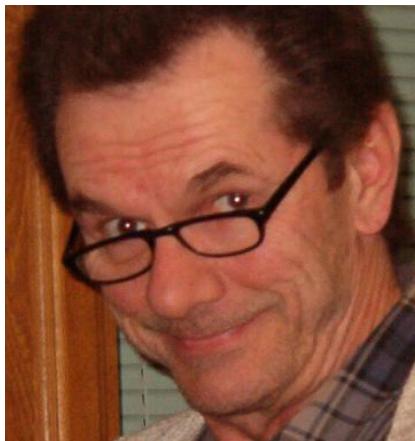
Outside in the cool night air the screams and splashing blood washed out of her mind. The vision of her quiet forest flickered briefly, but it was supplanted by the city. High overhead a raven croaked, gliding away into the darkness. Annie touched her rings. She'd dropped the knife somewhere as she walked down to the pulp mill.

FICTION: ANNIE THE DREAMER

When she got there she saw the other girls, working their trade with the sailors.

Annie found out the ship was taking on a half load of pulp here, then going down to Vancouver for a half load of potash. She knew they would let her go with them. They didn't care about the blood on her jeans, they just wanted to get her down to the crew's quarters.

The ship's name, "World Freedom," was stencilled on a life ring. She could go with them, and soon she would be with Sissy.



Jim Bowering has fought wildfires and controlled traffic in the air and on the sea. Now he writes stories. You can see his books and articles on his [blog](#) and contact him via [email](#) or on [mastodon](#).

TRAVEL: THREE DAYS IN HELSINKI

Veronica Dunyushkina



Photo: Veronica Dunyushkina

From crossing the Russian-Finnish border, from making the first step onto the Finnish ground in Helsinki, from that on, we could not stop being touched by how neatly and with care everything was made. Just about every 30 seconds. The ‘awww’-muscle strained itself so much, it started hurting. It happens every time. This care can be noticed in so many little details. In the contrast to the everyday careless everything, this both warms and aches my heart.

I won’t compare the differences of my geographical territory and Finland. The experts are already on it. But in Helsinki you feel like everything’s made for people, while in Russia... well, you don’t.

In Russia it feels like a mildly wild territory, where you always have to watch yourself, always have to be on alert, otherwise you’ll be crushed.

What I love the most about Finland, apart from what seems to be the endless care for how things are done, is how they manage to keep the nature and people with its industrial heritage alongside in harmony. Look, there’s your house, where you live, the shops, where you buy your food, the playground, where your children have fun, and then you make some steps – there’s a forest. You don’t have to take a train or a car or any vehicle to reach the nature. It’s right there! You are neighbours! And you treat your neighbour with respect.

In Helsinki there are two botanical gardens: a small, more of a decorative one, and the other – big and looking more like woods. Gumtäkt botaniska trädgård (no idea why it's in Swedish on Google Maps) – the second garden, is aligned with a soccer field, a little pond and a community garden. On the other side of it lies a big university body that also has a forest.

This time we visited an island popular among tourists called Suomenlinna. Not giving into much details (I don't know them anyway – read the brochure), it is an

island in 7-10 minute ferry ride away from Helsinki. It has a fortress with dungeons, and hills, and a lot of open shores with cliffs. Not minding the sun that came out of nowhere, I climbed a cliff, then saw another and climbed that one, and another, and one more. It seems like I climbed all of the cliffs. I was in such delight. I was surprised to know that people live on that island. It's not just a tourist attraction – there are private areas, where people have their lives. Unbelievable! It's like believing Iceland exists. Pffft. Wait, does it? Oh, darn it.



TRAVEL: THREE DAYS IN HELSINKI

When we said it was enough for today, we headed to Vantaa by a bus to our host. At that point I was so tired, I fell asleep on that bus and hit my head on the window. At least, after that I woke up. What a strike of energy. (I'm sorry.) Vantaa seemed like a perfect dormitory suburb for families with kids. So lovely. Turning on our inner detective and following the signs, we found the house. After 10 minutes of not being able to reach the host by phone, I took a guess to buzz to the apartment as I found its number in my notes. The door opened.

Matti turned out to be a lovely host with a lovely apartment in a lovely area. He showed us around, told to use whatever we need and in case of any questions – surely contact him. The apartment had exceedingly cozy aura. We nearly decided to spend the rest of our trip inside, pretending to be Finns living their Finnish lives. The cute little balcony, surrounded with flowers, was definitely a place to relax. And you would absolutely find two most essential Finnish things: a sauna and a coffee maker. Frankly, I would want to return to that place to have holidays there for the reason it was so nice, calm, comfortable, and quiet.

As soon as we could use that moment of relaxation, it struck us that we didn't have bus tickets back to Russia. We called every company we could find, but everything for the next day was booked and even on the day after. No blablacar rides either. As if our wish to stay in Matti's apartment a little bit longer came true. Sadly, it wasn't cheap, so we also had to find another place to stay. Eventually, everything settled down, and

the panic that hit at least one of us eased.

Reaching Sami, our new host, was another small adventure. In our attempts of figuring out the train system and how we could take the 'T'-train to get to the airport, even Finns, who tried to explain it to us, admitted: it was pretty intricate. Instead of 'T', we took the 'P'-train in hopes that "eventually we'll get there". I want to say that bad mobile connection sucks, so does having no Internet at hand. I didn't hear Sami's directions properly, which led to us waiting on the platform for 10 extra minutes, while Sami was waiting for us up on the parking lot. I was embarrassed. This man picked us up and drove to his house, where a grilling party was happening. He heartily invited us to join. Our hearts were already aching from the warm hospitality of Sami. He offered us food, and the offer remained even after we said we were vegans. The grilled crispy corn and veggies were so delicious, I wanted to cry. With us it were eight people around the fire. I frankly was surprised by a natural comedian everyone had inside. "Who wants to live in Russia?" Sindy from Montana/Arizona jokes. Oh, believe me, I ask this myself nearly every day. The stories were told. My stomach hurt from laughing. We truly had a blast that evening!

Sami wanted to cook us breakfast too, but we woke up early enough to decide we had time for further Helsinki exploration. When you come to Sami's home, you find yourself in a family, and you are welcome to be a part of this family for your stay. We are so thankful for Sami's hospitality, the words are failing.

We noiselessly snuck out of Sami's house and click-closed the door. The streets of this private territory hidden in the forest were disturbed merely by us two and infrequent dog-walkers and joggers. Bordered with road work white and orange barricades, the bus stop showed itself with the sign, which had the route number we needed. Still in doubt but with hope, we waited for the bus to arrive. When it did and stopped as we anxiously waved at it in fear and the door opened, the bus driver happened not to speak English. Although we managed to buy the tickets, the feeling that we did something not quite right remained. However, in the end, we didn't fuck it up. That is a feeling of being proud of oneself.

Coming from Saint-Petersburg, I was caught by surprise of finding the coffee situation in Helsinki being... not so developed as it is in Saint-Petersburg. The same was when I've been told that in Moscow there are, too, not so many specialty coffee places. That sounded too hard to believe to be true. Anyway, having been following some specialty coffee related places in Helsinki on Instagram, I've had a bunch of aims. It is possible that I have put more expectations than I should have.

The first spot, Good Life Coffee, possibly the most famous here being a local roastery, we found on a hill (at Kolmas linja 17). Honestly, it was a hill, just covered with asphalt and buildings. We arrived in Helsinki early on Saturday morning, so before we could nervously taste a cup of coffee, we had to take a leisure walk and then wait at the door a couple more minutes. Inside, we started looking around and examine the menu. Usual stuff, filter coffee, Aeropress... Wait.

Is that it? I checked the list again, but that's all I could see. That's so strange! So spoiled, we got pretty used to a variety of alternative brewing. We ordered Aeropress on Kenya Kamwangi and it was oh-so-delicious. I'm not a fan of Kenya, but I do try it sometimes, and whenever I like it, I will necessarily mention how not much of a fan of Kenya I am but "this one I really liked". We also tried Colombia in filter, but I described it as 'just good coffee'.

The second place on the second day had to be Andante (at Fredrikinkatu 20). More options! We chose Kalita and Ethiopia. Andante work with Five Elephants beans, and I haven't tried them yet. I had Ethiopia Mormora; served in a nice vintage bottle, it was pleasantly tender, and I wanted another portion, but soon we hit the road again.



Photo: Veronica Dunyushkina

TRAVEL: THREE DAYS IN HELSINKI



Photo: Veronica Dunyushkina

On the third and unplanned day in Helsinki we took a look in Sävy (at Aleksis Kiven katu 12), which has been on my list since the last city visit. Luckily, it was Monday and they were open. Again, no V60, no Kalita, just Aeropress. Aeropress seemed to be popular there. Sävy work with GLC, and we tried Ethiopia. We agreed on the following: coffee brewed in Aeropress is coffee for drinking at home, not in a café. Nothing too bright. We got so used to Hario V60 with sharp notes in taste since we take it every time in Saint-Petersburg. Unfortunately, there were none here. Nevertheless, I definitely enjoyed these three explorations. But after all, everyone has their own idea of ‘right’ coffee. So, in this sense, we did try Finnish specialty coffee.



Veronica Dunyushkina is a storyteller, musician and linguist. She can be reached on her [blog](#) and on [mastodon](#).

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MUSIC: THE RESURGENCE OF VINYL

Rich Wielgosz

I feel inspired. I was just on the phone with my very good friend Christopher from Atlanta, and as we often do, we discussed many things, and one thing that happened to come up today, was vinyl. No, not the stuff that your kinky friends wear to parties, but those round spinning things with grooves that we once used to listen to music. Yep, vinyl records.

Christopher mentioned wanting to have some of his music released on vinyl, and I mentioned that I had recently had a very similar conversation a few months ago, about the very same thing. I was talking to another audio engineer friend, and I talked about the first time I had heard some music that I had engineered, on the radio. That was a big day for me. The next big event for me was hearing a bigger record that I had worked on, on the radio, and seeing the CD in stores all over the place. And finally, one thing I would like to accomplish in life, is to get my boutique record-label going, and to release some of the music on vinyl.

That led to us talking about how vinyl is making a small resurgence, and how we used to enjoy listening to records with our friends.

Yes.

Listening to music used to be a social thing, when we were younger. We would get together, get some pizzas, and play records. It's what we did, and it was fun. Today, the internet and technology has made much of what we do more isolating. Sure, they call it Social Media, but most people are sitting at home alone, staring at their screens, waiting for their 'friends' to comment on their updates. This is why I call it "Anti-Social Media." The same thing happened to music with the advent of the original Sony Walkman. Listening to music became an ISOLATING experience. We put on some music, and listen with small headphones, or with ear-buds. The modern iTunes/MP3 Player/Phone thing is just an extension of that. Music is no longer a social thing, and it should be!



Photo: Rich Wielgosz

What Christopher and I decided, was that by Record Store Day, next year, we are both going to re-incorporate turntables into our home stereo systems (kids ask your parents), get together with friends, order some pizzas, and listen to records... like back in the day. Between now and then we are also going to drop in on our local vinyl stores, and pick up some new records, for the big day in April, and we hope you do, as well.

Now, I am not one of those people who thinks that vinyl is magic, and sounds 'warmer' and 'better' than CDs do. In fact, for critical listening, give me digital playback ten out of ten times. But there is something cool about taking the record out of the jacket in the company of friends, checking out the bigger album graphics, putting it on the turntable, listening, and being social. I miss the RITUAL.

And yes, vinyl is making a comeback, and I think it's for many of those same reasons that make digital convenient. People today think music is a file on their computer. At home they probably use their laptops to listen, and when they are out and about, they use their phone.

Having something tangible, something they can touch, is a new tactile experience. It probably makes the whole music-listening experience seem more real and more immersive, and they seem to be enjoying it

So, I hope you all will make the pledge along with Christopher and me, and break out the turntable, and the dusty old records, and get together with friends, break some bread, and make music-listening a social experience, once again.

Food: A Minimalist Recipe for 12 Madeleines

Erdal Ozdemir



Photo: Erdal Ozdemir

1. Melt 100g butter, keep on heat until brown & let it cool down
2. Mix below in a bowl by whisking:
 - 40g of all-purpose flour
 - 100g icing sugar
 - 40g of chopped nuts (any)
 - 3 egg whites
 - Two tea spoons of honey
 - Lemon or lime zest
3. Add butter & whisk more
4. Keep the mixture in fridge for 40mins
5. Place mixture on a Madeleine tray & keep in fridge for 20mins
6. Turn on the oven to 170C Celsius
7. Bake in the oven for a 10-15mins
8. Let it cool